

Category:	Procedure:	
School District Organization	School Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather	
Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:	Revised Date:
AP-A-141	December 2008	January 2020

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GENERAL

From time to time it is necessary to cancel classes across the school system due to poor road or school access conditions that have been caused by inclement weather such as rain/flooding or snow and ice. The Superintendent of Schools is the only person who may make the decision to close school for any reason.

Generally, the Superintendent will confer with the Assistant Superintendents, Chief of Security, Chief of Staff, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Public Affairs, Director of Maintenance and Operations, Director of Transportation and other appropriate school system staff and local governmental entities to gather information and make a decision concerning the status of schools. The intent is to make the decision as early as possible to allow parents to have time to make appropriate arrangements. In the event that the decision to cancel school or delay school must be made in the early morning hours, this decision should be made prior to 5 a.m. if at all possible.

As a general rule, when all schools in the system are closed due to inclement weather/snow days, all 255-day employees (including principals) should report to work. However, the safety of our employees is of the utmost importance and the district does reserve the right to make adjustments to this practice. If Central Office is closed, we will notify you of closure. If Central Office is open and you feel you are unable to safely arrive at your office, you should communicate with your immediate supervisor and take the appropriate leave.

TRAFFICABILITY ASSESSMENT

Knox County Schools security officers and bus contractors tasked to assess road conditions will be the primary source of bus route trafficability information. However, other sources may be used at the discretion of the Superintendent.

The Director of Transportation will identify specific bus contractors to make route assessments. Each contractor will be assigned responsibility for a geographic area of the county: north, south, east and west. Their activities will be coordinated by the Director of Transportation, who will alert the specified contractors when their services are required for route assessment.

The School Security office will also provide route assessment information. After hours, the security dispatcher and night patrol will respond as requested by the Director of Transportation, who will begin after-hours route assessment no later than 4 a.m.

DECISION TO CANCEL OR DELAY THE START OF SCHOOL

The Superintendent will convene appropriate staff members to review weather and road conditions no later than 4:45 a.m.

1 Staff members participating in any weather conference will include but not be limited to:

- 2
- 3 • Assistant Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer
- 4 • Assistant Superintendent/Finance and Human Resources
- 5 • Chief of Security
- 6 • Chief of Staff
- 7 • Chief Operating Officer
- 8 • Director of Maintenance and Operations
- 9 • Director of Public Affairs
- 10 • Director of Transportation
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13 The Superintendent may make a decision at this point or may defer the decision to cancel or delay the start
14 of school until additional information is available.

15 **DECISION TO RELEASE SCHOOL EARLY**

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18 The assessment and decision process to release school early due to weather conditions is the same as is the
19 process after school hours. When school is released early due to weather, the Central Office and all school
20 offices will remain open and operational until it is reasonably confirmed that all students have safely reached
21 their homes or have been picked up by their parents or guardian.

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23 Principals will ensure that school phones and 800 MHz radios are manned. No school will cease operation
24 or close until the principal reports out to the Superintendent and receives permission to do so.

25 **NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

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28 Once a decision has been made to cancel school, delay the start of school or release students early, the
29 Director of Public Affairs will begin dissemination of that decision.

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31 The Director of Public Affairs will:

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- 33 1. Develop a 20-25 second message for distribution by mass telephonic means. This message will
34 be delivered immediately to all parent and employee primary contacts if the decision is made at
35 6 a.m. or later. If the decision is made prior to 6 a.m. the message will be scheduled to begin
36 delivery at 6 a.m. Should the decision be made the day prior, the message may be delivered until
37 8 p.m. Message delivery will cease at 8 p.m. as not to disturb families in the late evening hours.
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- 40 2. Develop appropriate messaging for all social media platforms officially in use by Knox County
41 Schools.
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- 43 3. Place a cancelation alert on the school system website and the websites of all schools in the
44 system that use the KCS content management system.
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- 47 4. Contact the primary news media for the region.
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SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETIC EVENTS

All school-related activities and community use of school facilities generally will be canceled for any day school is canceled. Principals, coaches and other school personnel will not schedule impromptu practices, rehearsals or other activities at times when school is canceled.

If schools are closed due to weather conditions on the last school day before a weekend or break, weekend activities may still be conducted if weather conditions permit. The exceptions to cancellations prescribed in the policy are the use of school district facilities for primary and general elections and the designating of school district facilities by county or state authorities as emergency shelter sites.

The Superintendent may allow vital events to take place even if schools have been closed due to weather conditions, provided that the events can be safely conducted.